

## **Public Comment Concerning Redistricting Services**

March 20, 2011  
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Dear Commissioners:

**Now that the Redistricting Services (Technical Expert – Line Drawer) consultant has been selected, the Commission must exercise extraordinary oversight to avoid having the process co-opted by special interest groups.**

I believe that there is significant risk of the Commission completing its task with impartiality due to its alignment with selected alliance partners. Whether intended or not, these alliances and the associated risk has been exacerbated by the selection of Q2 Data and Research LLC as your Technical Expert (Line Drawer).

I have repeatedly expressed my concerns on this topic starting with my oral testimony on January 12 and written comments of January 26 and January 30.

Karin Mac Donald of Q2 has repeatedly asserted her non-affiliation with a major political party. She does, however, have long term working relationships with the 12 groups working under the umbrella of Redistricting CA. The unavoidable fact is that most of these groups are closely aligned with the Democrat Party. She has stated that she has been “training” these groups for over a year, and there is no reason to believe that she will not be strongly influenced by their input as she prepares maps for consideration by the Commission.

The admirable goal of most of these groups is to increase participation in the electoral process by historically underrepresented populations. With the rapid changes in California’s demographics, particularly the increase in Latino/Hispanic populations, there will be numerous easily defined minority/majority districts, assisting greatly in achieving this goal.

The risk to the Commission’s impartiality arises if these groups, either on their own, or through their close relationship with Ms. Mac Donald, extend their reach beyond this goal by becoming proxies for the Democrat Party. You cannot let the influence of these groups go beyond achieving reasonable and fair districts based VRA and community of interest considerations, to creating secure Democrat controlled districts.

One small way of minimizing this is to explicitly direct your staff and consultants to not use party registration as a factor in defining community of interest. When I attended an ARP training session on February 25, 2010, Karin Mac Donald (or perhaps Nicole Boyle, speaking on her behalf), suggested that party registration would be a good proxy for community of interest. This would be in direct conflict with the Commission’s requirement that “districts shall not be drawn for the purpose of favoring or discriminating against an incumbent, political candidate, or political party.” The use of such data must be strictly avoided.